



HR1281

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives wish to congratulate Vater Mae "Gran" Fite of
4 Chicago on the occasion of her 100th birthday on September 28,
5 2014; and

6 WHEREAS, Vater Fite was born on September 28, 1914 in
7 Carthage, Texas to the late Selma and Marvin Conners,
8 affectionately known as Big Momma and Big Daddy; and

9 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's only brother, Leon "Uncle Leon"
10 Conners, is 96 years of age and lives in Maywood with his
11 family; and

12 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's older sister, Herese "Aunt B"
13 Buckner, was a school teacher in the Chicago public schools and
14 a classically trained singer who spread her faith and talent
15 throughout the world at the behest of the Lutheran dioceses;
16 Vater and Herese shared the same birthday and lived as
17 bachelorettes in Oak Park until the ages of 89 and 91 when, in
18 2008, Herese fell ill and passed away; and

19 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's younger sister, the late Inez "Auntie
20 Inez" Jones, retired as school teacher in their hometown and
21 remained a lifelong resident of Carthage, Texas; and

1 WHEREAS, Vater Fite matriculated from Longview Elementary
2 and Carthage High School (which only went up to the 7th grade)
3 in 1926; during this time, she attended Mount Zion Christian
4 Methodist Episcopal Church where she sang in the choir and
5 taught Sunday school; and

6 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's first marriage was to JC Lilly in
7 1929; like so many in the depression, Vater and JC migrated
8 north; they eventually made their way to California, where
9 Vater was trained as a welder in the shipyards and worked as a
10 welder during World War II; when the war ended and work became
11 scarce, she returned to her children in Texas; she divorced and
12 later married Mr. Fite, to whom she was happily and briefly
13 married; upon his death, she joined her children and siblings
14 in Maywood; she later moved to the Westside of Chicago, where
15 she was employed with the State of Illinois as a caregiver
16 until her retirement in 1979; she temporarily returned to Texas
17 to care for her aging mother; upon her mother's death, Vater
18 returned to Oak Park to live with her sister and to be close to
19 her son and family; and

20 WHEREAS, Vater Fite is an active participant in the senior
21 community of Oak Park; she became an artist at the age of 65
22 and has many of her paintings and sculptures displayed
23 throughout Oak Park and Chicago, as well as in the many homes

1 of her relatives all over the United States; she taught herself
2 to play the violin at the age of 84; and

3 WHEREAS, Vater Fite is an avid reader and particularly a
4 fan of murder mysteries and historical fiction; some of her
5 favorite things are a good piece of beef, watching countless
6 hours of baseball, the color blue, and her infamously loud and
7 long discussions with her brother Leon on the phone; and

8 WHEREAS, Vater Fite is a sports enthusiast; though her
9 first love is baseball, she has followed the exploits of her
10 great-grandson, Evan Turner, on the basketball court and
11 attended games throughout the country during his collegiate and
12 professional NBA career; and

13 WHEREAS, Vater Fite has travelled throughout the United
14 States and, after obtaining her passport at the tender age of
15 97, she became a literal globetrotter, traveling to various
16 locales annually on the family vacation until deciding to
17 remain stateside this year; and

18 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's children are LeRoy Franklin
19 (Barbara) Lilly (deceased), Vater Jo (Robert) Goodman
20 (deceased), Billie June (Felix) Neal (deceased), and Gloria
21 Marves (deceased); and

1 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's grandchildren are Iris L. James,
2 Darius F. Lilly (deceased), State Representative Camille Y.
3 Lilly, Brian S. Lilly, Karen (Jasmyn) Lilly, Jerome (Jerry)
4 Goodman, Kevin (Jacqueline) Neal, and April (Vince) Braggs; and

5 WHEREAS, Vater Fite's great-grandchildren are Richard
6 James, Darius Turner, Evan Turner, Briana Lilly, Vince Braggs
7 Jr. (VJ), Briaja Braggs, and Brian Shawn Lilly II; and

8 WHEREAS, Vater Fite is a living legacy and the pride and
9 joy of her family; therefore, be it

10 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
11 NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
12 we congratulate Vater Mae "Gran" Fite as she becomes a
13 centenarian and wish her many more wonderful years; and be it
14 further

15 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
16 presented to Vater Fite as an expression of our esteem and
17 respect.